GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3557
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2016
Contract for Exploration and Research Rights
Patel Shri Prahlad Singh

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has signed a contract for exploration and research rights for polymetallic nodules including sulphides in the Indian Ocean from International Seabed Authority (ISA);

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time period of the said contract;

(c) the estimated number of minerals and projected quantity likely to be mined and processed;

(d) whether the Government proposes to involve foreign countries/companies already doing exploration in the Indian Ocean region in order to make the exploration economically viable; and

(e) If so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI. Y. S. CHOWDARY)

(a) Yes, Madam.
(b) Government of India signed a 15 year contract with International Seabed Authority (ISA) for exploration of polymetallic nodules from Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) on 25th March, 2002. Another 15 year contract was signed with ISA for exploration of polymetallic sulphides in Indian Ocean basin near Rodriguez Triple Junction on 26th September, 2016.
(c) The important metals found in polymetallic nodules are nickel, cobalt, copper and manganese. Initial estimated resource of polymetallic nodules in the site retained by India in Central Indian Ocean Basin is about 380 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) with 0.55 MMT of Cobalt, 4.7 MMT of Nickel, 4.29 MMT of Copper and 92.59 MMT of Manganese. The polymetallic sulphides are expected to contain rare earth minerals including gold and silver. No estimate of resources has been made yet for polymetallic sulphides as the exploration is in initial stage. As of now, the regulations for exploitation of the deep sea minerals are not formulated by ISA.
(d) The Ministry does not have any proposal at this point of time to involve any foreign countries/companies.
(e) Involvement of any foreign countries/companies is not needed at this time as only exploration is being carried out.